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worn operas scarcely compensate us for the great orchestral works which they displace.

THE Handel Festival progresses in the most satisfactory manner. The alterations made in the corner galleries were completed and tested on Good Friday with great success. Many hundreds of excellent additional seats have by this means been provided on the floor of the Centre Transept. It has been decided by the directors that the Shakspeare House shall be removed, and it is intended to raise the seats near the garden front of the Great Transept, which will doubtless command for them a ready sale. The Tickets for the Great Rehearsal have also been issued, and they are being sold very rapidly.

SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.

THE production of Mr. Costa's Oratorio, *Naaman*, at Exeter Hall, gave the members of the society, over which the composer has so ably presided for many years, a favourable opportunity for proving their appreciation of him by earnestly and vigorously working to give the utmost effect to his new work. We may at once state that the verdict of the Birmingham audience has been fully endorsed by the London public. A composition so conscientiously written is entitled to mature consideration; and when we state that the Sacred Harmonic Society has added one more to their stock of sacred works, we do so in the full conviction that successive representations of the Oratorio will strengthen the conviction of its merits. We have already freely expressed our opinion of the work on its first performance at Birmingham; and a second hearing of it has fully confirmed all that we then stated. It is not the out-pouring of that pure devotional feeling which, after years of intense yearning, selects the language of music for utterance to the world; but it is the composition of a well educated and accomplished artist, who writes to sacred words such music as he feels can be faithfully wedded to them; and whose intimate knowledge of the resources of the orchestra enables him to surround them with a charm which is sure to produce its effect upon an audience. It is certainly, in an artistic point of view, an advance upon *Eli*. Madame Rudersdorff, Miss Edmonds, Madame Sainton-Dolby, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Santley were the principal vocalists at Exeter Hall; and, although we missed the fresh voice and consummate finish of Madlle. Adeline Patti—who sang the part of *Adah* at Birmingham—the music was exceedingly well given throughout. The Oratorio has been since two or three times repeated; and is likely, we think, to be frequently given during the season.

MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.

WE have so often urged upon the directors of these concerts the desirability of giving an occasional hearing to some of the many pianists of eminence, resident and non-resident in the metropolis, that we were doubly pleased at the announcement of the "Schumann night" on the 15th ult., in the first place because it had the effect of severing the compact which seemed to have been formed between two artists who have hitherto almost exclusively occupied the instrument, and in the second place because it afforded an opportunity of paying a compliment to the widow of the composer, who is also one of the best pianists of the day. The programme contained the String Quartet in A minor (No. 1, Op. 41.) "Variations Symphoniques," "Fantasiestücke," (originally written for pianoforte and clarinet, but strangely enough played by Herr Joachim on the violin), the pianoforte Quartet in E flat, and two songs. The playing of Madame Schumann throughout the evening was instinct with that genius which makes itself felt in every note; and in the variations her manipulation was as perfect as any mere "passage player" could desire. The music of Schumann—so often spoken of and so little heard—was listened to with intense enjoyment by a crowded audience, and to those pioneers of progress who take the liberty of

judging for themselves, such a concert may speak more forcibly than all the "notices" for or against a man who is at least original enough to provoke controversy. Madame Schumann made her second appearance at these concerts on the following Monday, and performed Beethoven's Sonata in C (Op. 53), usually known as the "Waldstein Sonata."

AN interesting musical performance by the pupils of the London Society for teaching the blind to read, took place on the 27th of April, at the Hanover Square Rooms. Several part songs and choruses were sung in the most admirable manner; and piano-forte music was also executed with something more than mere manual dexterity. We have already had occasion to speak in the warmest manner of the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Edwin Barnes, the professional instructor of the musical department of this excellent society, and we congratulate the pupils upon having secured the services of a preceptor who not only throws his talents but his heart into the cause.

A CONCERT by the pupils of the tonic method of teaching singing took place at Exeter Hall on the 23rd ult., under the direction of Mr. W. S. Young, who announces himself as "the first conductor of the Tonic Sol-fa Association at the Crystal Palace."

A *matinée musicale* was given by Madame Eugène Oswald, on the 25th ult., at Messrs. Collard's rooms, when she performed a very good selection of pianoforte music, including Beethoven's "Sonata Appassionata," and Mendelssohn's Fantasia in F sharp minor. Madame Oswald has a very firm finger, and her style is unaffected and fluent. She was much and deservedly applauded, and is likely, we think, to become an established favourite as a player of the highest class of chamber music. She was assisted in the vocal department by Madame Oliviero and Mr. Renwick.

THE Hullah Choral Society gave a Concert on the 27th of April, at St. Martin's Hall, when Professor Bennett's "May Queen" was excellently performed, the principal vocalists being Madame Parepa, Miss Robertson, Miss Bradshaw, Mr. Cummings, and Mr. Patey. The second part was devoted to a miscellaneous selection, in which, in addition to some very good choral pieces, several solos were given, and Miss Fanny Howell performed, with much success, a Fantasia on the pianoforte.

THE "Canonbury Vocal Union," a society of amateurs, gave their last Public Rehearsal for the season on the 27th of April. The execution of the various pieces was most creditable, in some cases as near perfection as could be. The programme is worth noting:—Sanctus, (Bartniansky); Gloria in Excelsis, (Dr. Gauntlett); Blessing, glory! (Motett, for 2 choirs with quartett) J. S. Bach; Me ye have bereaved (C. Morales); In exitu Israel. Ps. cxiv., for 2 choirs (S. Wesley); Psalm xcii., for 2 choirs, with soli) Meyerbeer; Sweet honey-sucking Bees, madrigal (Wilbye); Around the May-pole, part-song (J. L. Hatton); Cynthia, thy song, madrigal (G. Croce); Dream, baby, dream, part-song (H. Smart); Harken to thy faithful swain, madrigal (C. Morales); Fire, fire! ballet (Morley); Down in a flow'ry vale, madrigal (Festa); Good Night, part-song (Dr. Gauntlett). The music was in all cases unaccompanied. The conductor was Mr. E. Prout, B.A.

On Monday, the 8th ult., Mr. H. S. May gave his annual concert at the Milton Hall, Camden Town. The programme consisted chiefly of songs, ballads, and duets. Mr. May also performed several pianoforte solos. The principal vocalists were Miss Fosbroke, Miss Paton; Messrs. Chaplin Henry, Buckland, Mathison, Baxter, Lee, and Wilton. Mr. Beresford and Mr. May accompanied on the pianoforte.

THE Albany Choral Society which has been established only a few months, performed some pieces in a very efficient manner, under the direction of Mr. Alfred J. Acres, the hon. conductor, at an entertainment given by